

# Syntax Seminar (BBN-ANG-252): Handout 6

ELTE, Spring 2024

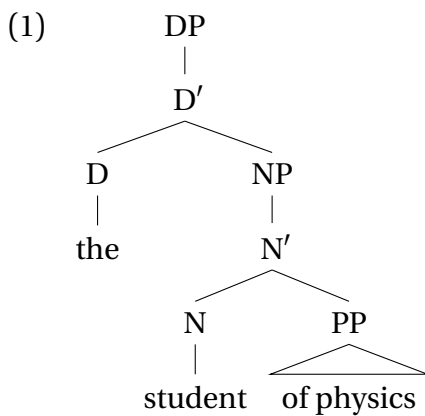
Ekaterina Georgieva

ekaterina.georgieva@nytud.hun-ren.hu

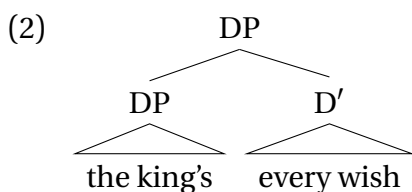
This is a summary of BESE: Ch. 4.2.

## 1 Recap

- In HO4 (cf. BESE Ch. 3.1), we briefly discussed the structure of noun phrases.
- Noun phrases are DPs: the D head takes an NP complement (1); furthermore, Ns can have a PP complement.



- Possessors are in the specifier of the DP (2). The structure of possessives will be further qualified in Section 2.



- Noun phrases can have different modifiers. We discussed adjectives – they are adjoined to N'. See Section 3 on other types of adjuncts.

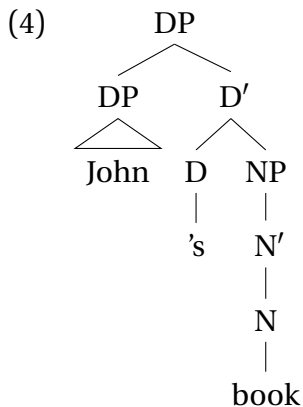
## 2 Possessives

- Possessors are in Spec,DP. But how to explain (3c) – why are possessors in complementary distribution with D heads?

- (3) a. the book  
b. John's book  
c. \*John's the book

- Proposal: **the 's morpheme (the Saxon genitive) occupies the D head.**

We shall then modify the structure given in (2) as in (4). This is how you'll be expected to represent the structure of possessive noun phrases in the final exam.



- The analysis of possessive pronouns (*my, your, etc.*) is more controversial, see the textbook for discussion. (They will not be included in the final exam.)

✎ Let's draw the trees for (5) and (6):

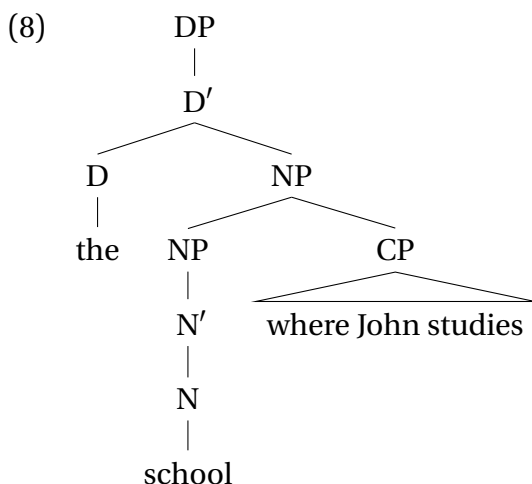
- (5) a. Sam's car  
b. Sam's new car
- (6) a. Sam's student of math  
b. Sam's smart student of math

**Homework – to be submitted by email! Draw the trees for (7).**

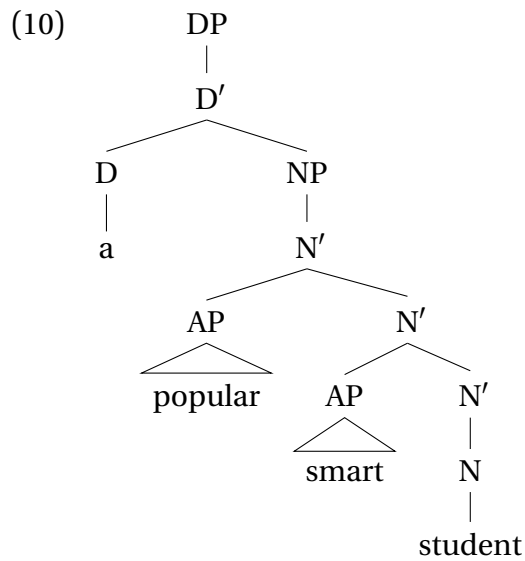
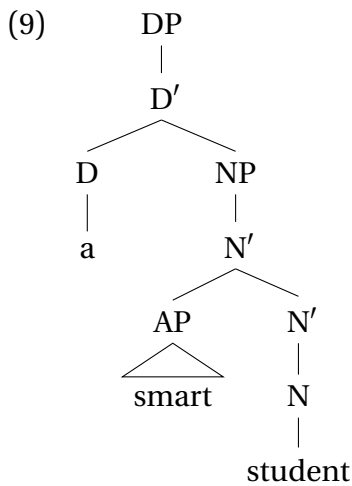
- (7) a. Peter's new interesting book  
b. a magnificent Gothic building

### 3 Adjuncts within the noun phrase

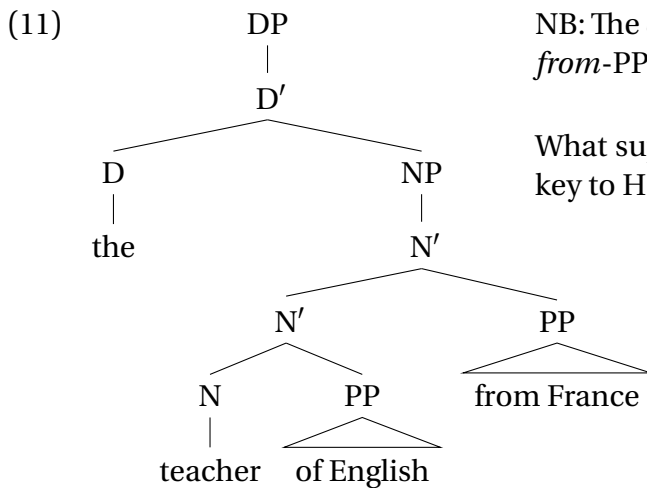
- Noun phrases can have different modifiers: adjectives, PP-adjuncts, relative clauses. Those are either right- or left-adjoined.  
Adjunction to N' or to NP. Adjunction is recursive.
- Relative clauses are NP-adjuncts, as in (8). In this course, we will not discuss relative clauses in detail, and they will not be covered in the final exam.



- Adjectival modifiers left-adjoin to N'. (10) shows a recursive structure.



- Noun phrases can also have PP-adjuncts: they are right-adjoined to N' (11).



NB: The *of*-PP is the complement of N, whereas the *from*-PP is an adjunct.

What supports this? See BESE: p. 336–337 and the key to HO4

☞ Let's draw the trees for (12) (adapted from BESE: Ch. 4, ex. 4).

Note: pay attention to the difference between complements and adjuncts.

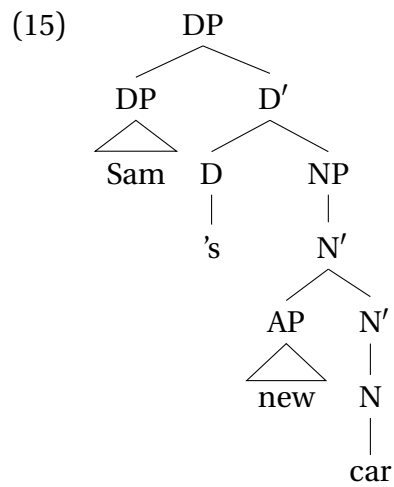
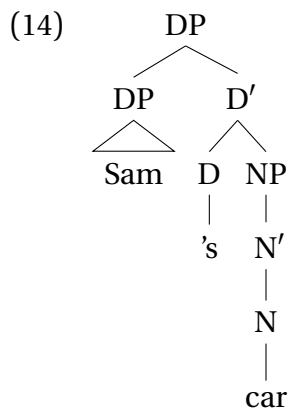
- (12)
- the President's speech on climate change
  - the President's speech in the Congress
  - the most interesting books on Physics
  - this book with a red cover

☞ (More advanced) Let's draw the trees for the italicized noun phrase in (13). Hint: There are two possibilities (BESE: Ch. 4., ex. 2).

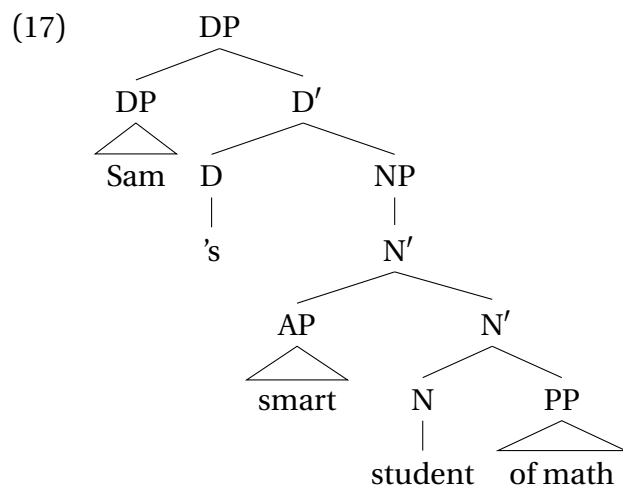
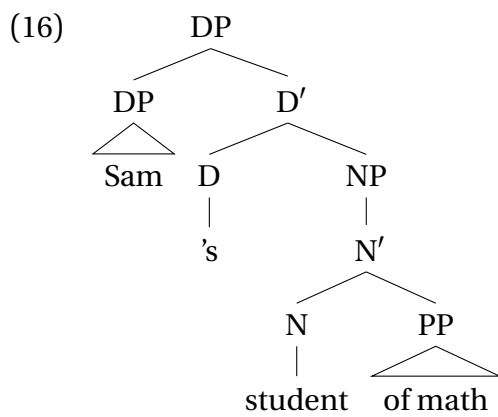
(13) I know *the new students of Mathematics from London*.

## 4 Key

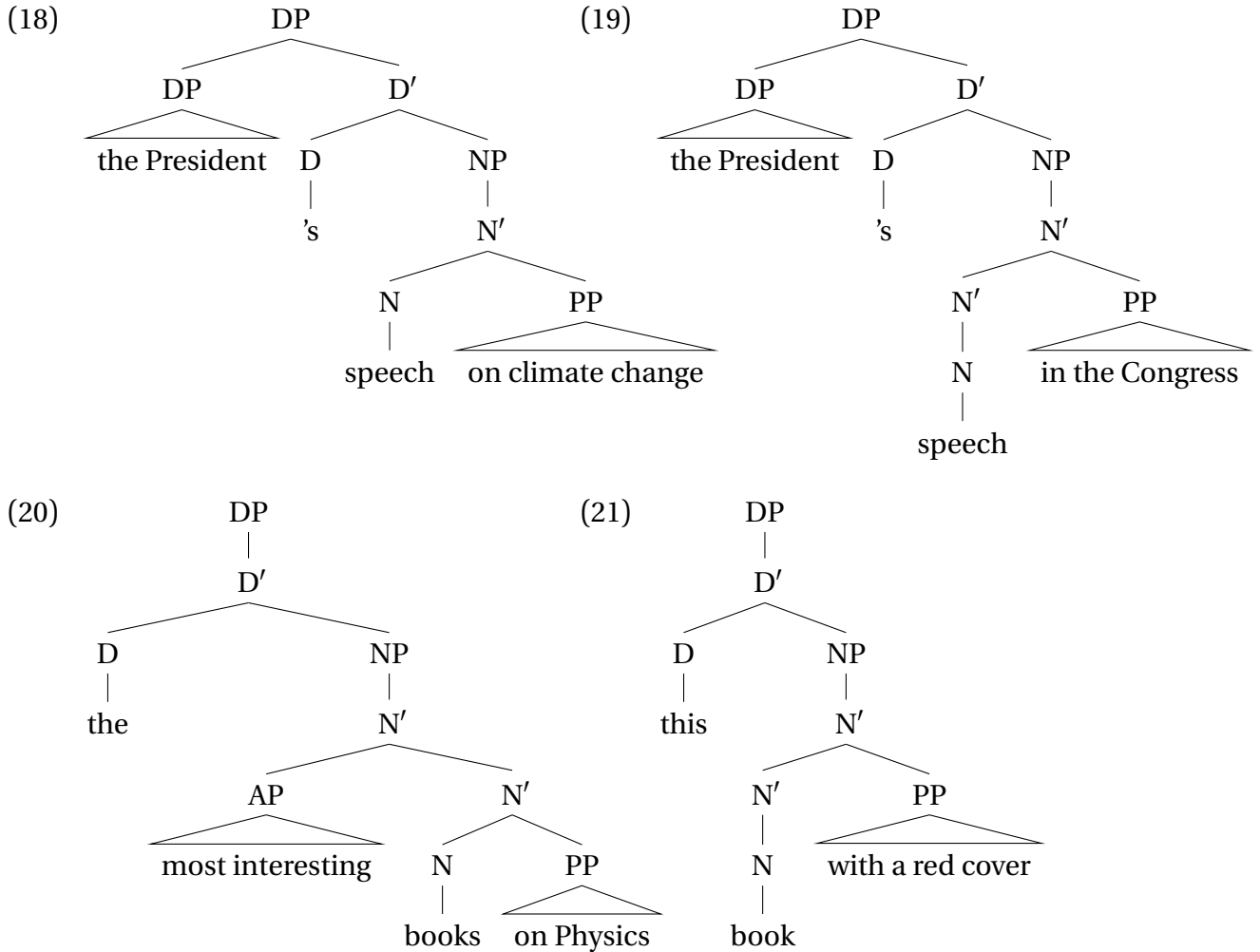
- Possessive noun phrases with adjectival modifiers:



- Possessive noun phrases with a PP complement and adjectival modifiers:

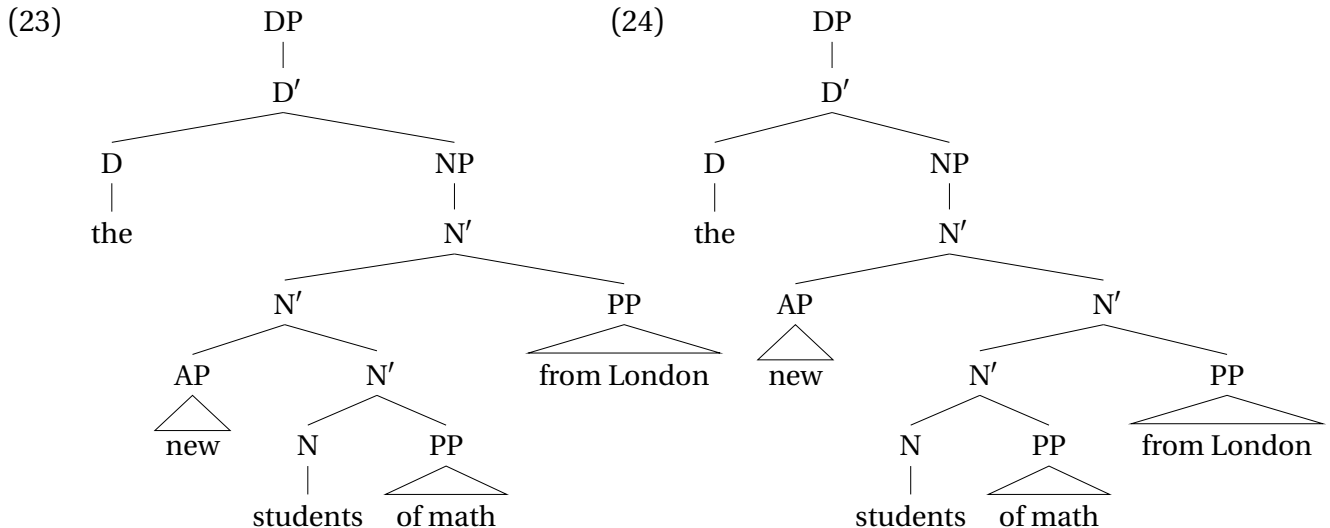


- The PPs in (18) and (20) are complements of N, whereas the PPs in (19) and (21) are adjuncts (they right-adjoin to N'). So, as a rule of thumb, we analyse *of*-PPs and *on/about*-PPs as complements of the noun and all other types of PPs as adjuncts (see also BESE Ch. 3, ex. 12 and 15 for discussion).



- In the noun phrase in (22), the *of*-PP is a complement of N. Additionally, the noun phrase contains two modifiers, an AP (*new*) and a PP (*from London*). They are both adjoined to N': the former is left-adjoined and the latter is right-adjoined. In principle we can adjoin them in two orders: the AP first (23) or the PP first (24).

(22) the new students of Mathematics from London



The structures in (23) and (24) give the same linear order. Given that there are two possible structures, we might expect difference in meaning: ‘I know those new students of Mathematics who are from London’ for (23) and ‘I know those new students of Mathematics who are from London’ for (24). But this is hard to capture.

However, the substitution test can help us prove that both structures indeed exist. The pro-form *one* substitutes the N': when we substitute the N' with the adjunct in (23) we get (25) (because the AP is adjoined first), and when we apply the test to (24) we get (26) (because the PP is adjoined first).

(25) I know the new students of Mathematics from London and Peter knows the ones from Paris.

ones = new students of Mathematics

(26) I know the new students of Mathematics from London and Peter knows the old ones.  
ones = students of Mathematics from London